Chaucer and the Courtly Love Debate

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要　約

Chaucer と宮廷風恋愛をめぐる論争

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本論文は密接に関連する２つの目的がある。第一は，主に Geoffrey Chaucer の作品に拠りつつ，'courtly love'（宮廷風恋愛）という語の妥当性を再確認することである。第二は，"the old romance of adultery"（「古い姦通物語（ロマンス）」）と"the new romance of marriage"（「新しい結婚物語（ロマンス）」）との間の隔りに橋渡しをしたのは，Chaucer 以後の詩人達というより，むしろ Chaucer 自身であったということを証明することである。

まず最初に，宮廷風恋愛にせよ，その文学にせよ，これらを真面目に取り扱うことを拒否する最近の批評家の議論を検討する。ここでは，圧倒的な文献的証拠が受け入れられる必要を強調する。

Chaucer は，より初期の詩の中で宮廷風のコンヴェンションを用いているが，その例を次にあげる。そしてこの時期の作品においてさえ，そのコンヴェンションは，しばしば結婚と関連していることを見る。

最後に，*The Canterbury Tales* において結婚を扱った物語を分析する。Chaucer がこの重要な主題について，彼の時代の様々な考え方を探究している次第を明らかにするためである。中でも特に The Franklin's Tale（自由農民の話）に注目する。この物語は，しばしば結婚における平等について忠告していると莫然と解釈されてきたが，より綿密な分析を通して，Franklin は，"gentillesse" を持って行使される男性の "lordshipe" の必要を力説していることを明らかにする。

こうした忠告は，今日では時代遅れに見える。しかしながら，これは中世の宮廷の価値観，そして Chaucer の生きた社会の結婚観の間の均衡をはかった意見なのである。このような均衡を達成し得たことは，Chaucer の偉大さの一つの証しなのである。

In the last two decades, medievalists have been questioning the whole concept of courtly love. Some of them claim that it suggests too large a divide between art and life. The only way for us to overcome this gap now, they say, is to go back to the medieval texts in which so-called courtly love conventions have been found, and interpret them as having an ironical or even a frivolous intention. However, this seems unreasonable in the light of their great popularity and influence. That just such a divide actually existed is, moreover, apparent from Chaucer's handling of the subject of marriage in *The Canterbury Tales*. To deny that opposing values had developed in literature and society, and even within society itself, is to deny Chaucer his achievement in dealing with and reconciling them.

The question-begging of C. S. Lewis's notorious "Every one has heard of courtly love,"[1] or Derek Brewer's more recent comment that the "elaboration" of sexual passion in the Middle Ages is "well known,"[2] can be avoided by starting with a brief reminder about the meaning and provenance of the term 'courtly love.' It was first popularized by Gaston Paris in 1883 as a way of characterizing a kind of romantic fervour which figures in a number of medieval texts, and which apparently dates back to the troubadours or poet-musicians of the late eleventh century Provençal courts—beyond that perhaps to the Arab culture of Muslim Spain or the Middle East.[3] Paris used the term specifically about the adulterous love of Sir Lancelot for Queen Guenevere in Chrétien de Troye's Arthurian romances; however, he suggested that their love was just one instance of a more widespread phenomenon. Although the term only appears once in troubadour poetry, several other terms which appear more frequently—*fine amor,* for example—have been supposed to convey much the same meaning,[4] and later critics, notably Lewis, continued to use it as a convenient way of labelling a whole system of ideas, an entirely new approach to love which was felt to have evolved in medieval times.

Then reaction set in. Just as Lewis once considered romantic love to be the invention of these early poets, so, in the sixties, a new generation of medievalists claimed that what he called 'courtly love' was merely the invention of the critics. These days, even scholars like Brewer, who often seem to be referring to the concept itself, tend to avoid using the term. What happened?

One of the first and most frequently mentioned opponents of courtly love was E. Talbot Donaldson, who suggested in 1965 that there was no point in turning "a Provençal rarity into a term for a major medieval concept," since "no scholars ever seem to mean the same thing by it."[5] Now, many literary terms have a vague currency, yet no one suggests that they should be excised from the language of scholarship. It soon appears that what he calls 'the real trouble' with this term lies elsewhere. The sticking point, for Donaldson and many subsequent medievalists, is the extra-marital nature of the love involved. Adultery, which Lewis stipulated as one of the four elements of courtly love (along with Humility, Courtesy, and the Religion of Love[6]) simply *could not* have been

approved of by society as a whole, they say. Still less, they claim, could it have been condoned by a highly moralistic writer like Chaucer.

These considerations were taken up in 1968 by John F. Benton, in his contribution to a collection of papers read at a conference on courtly love. Benton brought in a wealth of supporting evidence. Forget Paris, Lewis and other earlier writers on the subject, he urged, and recall instead the *mores* of the feudal age. Young noblemen bold enough to indulge in adultery in those days risked very severe and ignominious penalties. Castration was "a common form of private revenge," Benton pointed out[7] (Peter Abelard, the French philosopher and theologian, was the most famous man of the period to suffer such a fate). Besides, he went on, the worst form of adultery was considered to be that between a vassal and his lord's wife. This was no less than treason, and punishable by death. Here Benton cited the case of two noblemen accused of adultery with the wives of two French princes. They were not only castrated, but "dragged behind horses to the gallows and hanged."[8] What nonsense this makes, said Benton, of the idea that medieval poetry promoted extra-marital love affairs.

Fuel to the fire was added in F. X. Newman's Preface to the collection of papers read at this conference, published under the title of *The Meaning of Courtly Love.* If such unbridled passion for women was liable to have dreadful repercussions for the man in medieval times, that was because it was "clearly incompatible. . . . with conventional medieval views on the psychology and theology of sexuality."[9] Quite simply, most medieval men (like many of their modern counterparts) thought themselves superior to women. Other recent critics, like David Aers, have sought to show that the marriages of this period were largely a matter of financial and practical considerations, with a merchant's wife, for instance, being bought "to receive the dowry which procured me [her new husband] a larger share and more consideration in our company."[10] What is more, physical desire was, we are told, seen as a distraction from higher things, acceptable to God only when strictly governed, and set within the hallowed limits of the married state. Numerous anti-feminst religious tracts, from Ecclesiasticus onwards, can be adduced here. Saint Jerome even went so far as to condemn loving one's own wife passionately: "There is nothing blacker than to love a wife as if she were an adulteress."[11] Then surely, any system of ideas which included the adulation of women was doomed before it could possibly take root in society as a whole, let alone find a place in its literature. (Those who deny the existence of courtly love are quick to remind us that love for the Virgin Mary, sometimes given as a possible source for the elevation of women to a higher status, was a "disinterested devotion,"[12] far from the yearnings of the flesh.)

How, then, are we to read medieval texts like Chrétien's *Lancelot,* or Andreas Capellanus's *De Amore,* or Guillaume de Lorris's and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose?* Even when adultery as such does not occur, these works show the kind of love which is not amenable to the ordinary laws of society. Yet they were tremendously popular. The *Roman* in particular "was perhaps the most famous and influential poem in the Middle Ages."[13] Chaucer himself is thought to have translated about 5,000 lines of it, and certainly used it as a source of material throughout his writing career. Is there

nothing for it, now, but to follow the new school of thought and interpret these and other so-called 'courtly love' texts as "ironic and humorous"?[14]

What is interesting here is that Lewis himself was among the first to admit, in his thorough and very readable analysis of the *Roman,* that there is a good deal of satire and ridicule in the poem, and even that Guillaume de Lorris's part of it might well have ended, had he lived to complete it, "with the defeat and refutation of Love"[15]—just as Lewis also pointed out the uncertainties over the origins of courtly love,[16] the astonishing difference between the reality of the male-female relationship and courtly love ideals,[17] the unlikelihood of any association with the cult of the Virgin Mary,[18] and the surprising "cleavage between Church and court."[19] There is nothing new, in other words, about most of the accusations levelled against the idea of courtly love; Lewis himself had anticipated them. Where he differed from his (and courtly love's) later critics was chiefly in his acceptance that there *are* serious elements both in the early troubadour poetry and in these works, and therefore that we simply have to admit the existence of this phenomenon. The case must be argued, in fact, on the literary evidence rather than from a socio-historical standpoint.

This is, of course, easier said than done. The problem is that the medieval writer would have no hesitation, finally, in the choice between secular and divine love (hence Lewis's own assumption about the ending of the first part of the *Roman*). Thus we can assume an ultimate intention to place secular love lower down in the scale of values; the garden of courtly life, that garden of Delight in which the rosebud of love grows, must be shown to be inferior to the Garden of Paradise, as indeed it is, by Jean de Meun.[20] Similarly, not only Edmund Spenser's corrupt Bower of Bliss, but even his Garden of Adonis, where love is nourished, are obviously to be differentiated from the vision of the New Jerusalem in *The Faerie Queene,* much later. Nevertheless, in the "paradys erthly" (*The Romaunt of the Rose,* 1. 648[21]) there are undoubtedly qualities and experiences which can help to refine the lover, and which cannot be dismissed as mere frivolity. *Jeu d'esprit* is a phrase which Donaldson has used of *De Amore;* Lewis himself used it in explaining the "procedure" of the *Roman.*[22] But Lewis was not talking about the poem's content. Underlying his whole discussion is the assumption that this large body of widely read literature encompasses much that is gracious and elevated in the medieval spirit.

Lewis's judgement in this matter, supported by a keen sensibility and extensive scholarship, can surely be trusted. Indeed, it has recently been corroborated by Bernard O'Donoghue's impressive collection of early medieval texts, exhibiting many common courtly elements, from several different languages.[23] Lewis has been much maligned by the opponents of the courtly love concept, but he can fairly be said to have misled future generations of students in only two respects. One was in suggesting that adultery continued to be an important aspect of courtly love as it appeared in English poetry, and the other was in deliberately excluding Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* from his discussion. One mistake may have resulted from the other. If he had not concentrated on *Troilus and Criseyde* as "the consummation" of Chaucer's labours as a "poet of courtly love,"[24] and dismissed the *Canterbury Tales* as "glorious reading, but . . . sterile,"[25] he might have

noticed that no adultery takes place in *Troilus* (Troilus is a bachelor and Criseyde a widow), and that Chaucer is here engaging in a process which comes to fruition in the *Tales.* It is the very process which Lewis thought Chaucer had left to his successors: the process of crossing the frontier between "the old romance of adultery" and "the new romance of marriage."[26]

The best proof that there *was* "a wild Provençal vine,"[27] and that it was still blossoming, is provided by Chaucer's continuing efforts to tame it.

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To appreciate fully this aspect of Chaucer's achievement in the *Tales,* we need to look first at his earlier work.

It was certainly assumed, in the late fourteenth century, that Chaucer had translated at least a part of the *Roman* into English. Indeed, he claims to have done so himself in the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women,* where he specifically says that his intention was to "forthren trouthe in love" (1. 472). And, as I have already pointed out, his poetry is often heavily indebted to it. Whether we talk about 'courtly love' or "the Code of Courtly Courtship"[29] or *'fine amor'* or simply "sophisticated ideas concerning love,"[30] the fact remains that his early work, in particular, exhibits a striking pattern of symptoms, trials and inspirations experienced by lovers, very much along the lines of the *Roman.* First, a young nobleman finds himself in circumstances which lead to his encounter with a beautiful and gracious woman:

> "Hit happed that I cam on a day
> Into a place ther that I say,
> Trewly, the fayrest companye
> Of ladyes that evere man with yë* (*eye)
> Had seen togedres in oo place. . . . "
>
> (*The Book of the Duchess,* 11. 805–9)

He falls in love with one of them quite suddenly: "the god of love . . . sodeynly he hit him at the fulle"(*Troilus and Criseyde* I , 11. 206 and 9). This woman is then worshipped as an ideal being, so that he forgets all about himself and his previous concerns:

> Hir love I best, and shal, whyl I may dure,
> Bet than myself an hundred thousand deel,* (*part)
> Than al this worldes richesse or creature.
>
> ("A Complaint to his Lady," 11. 30–3)

From now on, he must suffer the torments of love-sickness, so well described by the royal eagle in *The Parliament of Fowls*—"in myn herte is carven every veyne" (1. 425)—and face the special agony of putting his love into words and risking rejection. Yet this does not prevent him from continuing to love the woman and neglect himself:

> "And thus I lived ful many a day,
> That trewly I hadde no ned
> Ferther than my beddes hed
> Never a day to seche* sorwe; (*seek)
> I font* hyt redy every morwe (*found)

For–why I loved hyr in no gere."* (*in no changeable manner)

(*The Book of the Duchess,* 11. 1252–7)

Being concerned only to serve his lady faithfully and win her favour, he is quite prepared to be "pacient" in these "paynes" (*Troilus and Criseyde* Ⅲ, 1. 142) and even to face death in her servitude.

Secrecy, a common feature in this kind of love poetry, is only important to one of Chaucer's lovers (Troilus) and adultery never seems to be involved. Indeed, even in these earlier works, such love is frequently associated with marriage. *The Book of the Duchess* relates to the love of the young John of Gaunt for his first wife, Blanche, so that although the woman at first rejects the man "Al outerly" (1. 1244), a year later she gives him "The noble yift of hir mercy" (1. 1270)—and a ring. After that, they live through the joys and sorrows of life together until the knight loses her, not to another, but to death. (Blanche died of the plague in 1368 or 9.) As for Troilus, he exhibits the heightened sensibility of the courtly lover when he has some hope of winning Criseyde ("he bicom the frendlieste wight, / The gentilest, and ek the mooste fre," Ⅰ, 11. 1078–9) and when he does win her, their relationship takes on the aspect of a marriage,[31] to the extent that a secret wedding is sometimes mooted,[32] and Lewis can refer to Book Ⅲ as "in effect a long epithalamium."[33] In *The Parliament of Fowls,* courtly love forms are used specifically to help the 'formel' or female eagle "chese a make" (1. 631), and in this poem, a glowing and fruitful goddess, Nature, appears in the garden of Love, in sharp juxtaposition to a Venus surrounded by darkness and suffering. Clearly, Chaucer is not allowing himself to be limited by the expectations of the courtly audience.

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Of *The Canterbury Tales,* Derek Pearsall has written:

> The encouragement that Chaucer gives to new kinds of imagination and intellectual activity, the shock to habituated perceptions, is something that he is helped to achieve through the freedom granted to individual tales, and the constant shifting of points of view.[34]

Here, in this massive project, Chaucer found the scope he needed to expand his vision of love fully, blending current fashionable and literary conceptions about it with the practical concerns of daily life, and suggesting the deep significance of this new whole.

The Knight's Tale, the first to be narrated, was written before the rest of the *Tales* were planned, and seems to have been only cursorily adapted to the later framework.[35] Like *Troilus,* it is a re–telling of one of Giovanni Boccaccio's romances, which nevertheless becomes very much Chaucer's own creation. Not only is it less than a third as long as its source, but it includes many new details from Chaucer's fertile imagination, and ideas derived from the Christian philosopher, Boethius. One significant effect of these changes is to depersonalize the young people on whom the plot focusses—the two Theban noblemen, Palamon and Arcite, who are rivals in love; and Emily, the object of their love, who is the sister–in–law of Duke Theseus of Athens. Palamon and Arcite hardly exist outside their roles as competitors for Emily's hand (their previous relationship as cousins and blood–brothers is set aside, as it never entirely is in Boccaccio).[36]

Emily herself becomes an ideal figure, without any of the foibles and preferances which Boccaccio gives her. A comparison of her behaviour in the garden, on the occasion when the knights first see her from the tower in which Theseus has imprisoned them, shows how much closer Chaucer has brought her to the courtly love conception of pure womanhood worthy of unstinting service.[37] On the other hand, Duke Theseus becomes more human and humane in Chaucer's work, and it is he who points out the folly of Palamon and Arcite's fighting over Emily:

> "Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?
> Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, ypayed
> Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!"
>
> (11. 1801–3)

In such passages, Chaucer gives the weight of Theseus's considerable personal authority to the new philosophical content, thus putting the rivalry and aspirations of the two desperate young men into perspective.

Chaucer seems to have built up the courtly love element of the plot, only to cut it down to size again. Why? The answer is revealed during Theseus's last long speech, when he talks of the "faire cheyne of love" (1. 2989). The "Moevre" (1. 3004) from whom the order of the world is derived, he says,

> "hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,* (*established his order)
> That speces of thynges and progressiouns
> Shullen enduren by successiouns. . . ."
>
> (11. 3012–4)

These words lead straight into a long meditation on mortality, for Theseus's first purpose here is to encourage Emily to "take . . . weel" (1. 3043) Arcite's accidental death after winning her hand in the tournament. However, his ultimate purpose is to persuade her to marry the other suitor, Palamon, and turn sorrow into "parfit joye, lastynge evermo" (1. 3072). This is the first indication, in the *Tales,* of Chaucer's interest in marriage as an estate which can and should assimilate the headstrong passions of courtly lovers, and channel them into those "certeyn boundes" (1. 2993) which are appointed to all things on this earth. As Charles Muscatine has said, the poem does not show Chaucer's revolt "against the courtly code which the knights represent," but, through Theseus's comments on it, a "mature appraisal" of it.[38] Moreover (and this is what Muscatine missed), this "mature appraisal" leads to one of the most significant ways of setting up "bulwarks against the ever–threatening forces of chaos"[39] which Theseus can accomplish: the marriage which binds desire and "wommanly pitee" (1. 3083), Emily and Palamon, Thebes and Athens—and thus produces a happy ending for the romance.

Such an ending is particularly fitting for a tale which draws on Boethian ideas, for it is a good example of that *concordia discours,* that harmony which is described in *De Arithmetica* as "the joining of several things and the consent of contraries."[40]

Because this marriage does seem to be symbolic,[41] and is simply summed up in a 'happy ever after' formula, The Knight's Tale is not considered to be part of the so–called Marriage Debate in *The Canterbury Tales.* Until recently, most critics interested in

Chaucer's views on marriage have excluded The Nun's Priest's Tale as well—after all, it concerns a cock and hen rather than human beings. Nevertheless, some connection can be seen not only between these two apparently quite dissimilar tales, but also between both of them, and the tales which deal with marriage more thoroughly. In the first place, Chaucer has the Knight encourage the telling of the tale by criticizing The Monk's Tale and calling for a story containing "joye and greet solas," and tending towards its subject's "prosperitee" (11. 2774 and 7). At the heart of the variously interpreted comedy which follows, is Chaunticleer's love and lust for his wife, and consequent over-readiness to listen to her. Like any adored courtly lady,

> trewely she hath the herte in hoold
> of Chaunticleer, loken in every lith.* (*locked in every limb)
> (11. 2874–5)

Pertelot is, indeed, quick to demand from him some of the qualities of a courtly admirer. He should be "hardy, . . . free, / And secree, and no nygard" (11. 2914–5). In the event, he "loved hire so" (1. 2876) that he took her advice, ignored a warning dream, and very nearly lost his life to a flattering fox. The narrator says quite clearly,

> My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere,
> That tok his conseil of his wyf, with sorwe.
> (11. 3252–3)

Although it is couched in a most amusing and tactful way ("I kan noon harm of no womman divyne," 1. 3266) there should be no mistaking the obvious moral of such a story: after courtship, there must be a shift in the relationship between the attentive male and the exalted woman, or disaster is bound to follow. If we look back at The Knight's Tale, we shall notice that Theseus asked Emily to accept Palamon as her "housbonde *and for lord*" (1. 3081; emphasis added).

While Chaucer points out the necessity for a change of roles, he does not minimize the difficulties involved. In fact these difficulties provide the subject-matter for the several tales considered, since George Kittredge's essay on them early in this century, as "The Marriage Group."[42] It is surely wrong to replace what Brewer calls the "platitude" of "the incompatibility of love with marriage in the poetry of Chaucer" with his own bland statement: "of course, love is perfectly compatible with marriage in The Wife of Bath's Tale, The Clerk's Tale (though with a difference), The Franklin's Tale especially, and others."[43] For what we find in them is, first and foremost, conflicts of interest which put mutual love in jeopardy. The happiness of the marriage which concludes The Wife of Bath's Tale depends partly on magic, and follows the old crone's speech which indicates that, under normal circumstances, a pretty young woman will be a problem to her husband. Indeed, we could see this for ourselves, from the "walkynge out by nyghte" of the Wife of Bath, recounted in her own Prologue (1. 397). The Merchant's Tale also shows a young woman cuckolding her husband: whether or not January deserves to be so crudely repaid for his lustful and propietary treatment of May, it hardly shows the compatibility of love with marriage. It could be argued that the Wife of Bath and May are both outside the courtly milieu, and therefore cannot be expected to behave with due

propriety; Griselda in The Clerk's Tale is even more lowly, "born and fed in rudenesse" (1. 397), but her marriage to a "markys" (1. 64) who rules his country brings her into a higher rank. Yet her marriage, too, has problems. She becomes not the "whippe" (The Wife of Bath's Prologue, 1. 175) but the long-suffering victim of her husband Walter's "merveillous desir t'asseye" (1. 454). Since the Clerk himself finds Walter's tyranny "yvele" (1. 460), and Griselda's "pacience" (1. 1181) beyond the power of wives in real life, we may well feel that the happy ending, like that of the Wife's tale, is somewhat spurious.

Surely the struggles of these assorted spouses reflect not so much love—even love "with a difference," as Brewer puts it—as the painful actuality of a power struggle which cuts across all classes. Only the genre determines whether we should laugh or cry at it.

As Ian Robinson has claimed, "Chaucer is the main source of evidence about himself."[44] He is a good one about his age, as well. The sophistications of literature, the court and the higher echelons of society; the demands of the Church and public morality; the needs and values of individuals—these all seemed to pull in different directions. Human relations were obviously as problematic then as now. However, what Chaucer could do to relate the ideals of the time to common experience, he did.

In The Franklin's Tale, Arveragus's wooing of Dorigen is very much in line with the courtly idea. Yet Brewer is quite right in emphasizing the success of *this* marriage. How is it achieved? Here is the beginning of the relationship:

> Ther was a knyght that loved and dide his payne
> To serve a lady in beste wise;
> And many a labour, many a greet emprise* (*enterprize)
> He for his lady wroghte, er she were wonne.
> For she was oon the faireste under sonne,
> And eek thereto comen of so heigh kynrede
> That wel unnethes * dorste this knyght, for drede, (*hardly)
> Tell hire his wo, his peyne and his distresse.
>
> (11. 730–7)

But once Dorigen has taken "pitee" (1. 740) on Arveragus, he enters into a different kind of relationship with her, which allows him to be both "hir servant and hir lord,— / Servant in love, and lord in marriage" (11. 792–3). This statement is generally taken, as A. C. Spearing has taken it, to indicate "a combination of, or compromise between, the two radically opposed relationships of lover and mistress and husband and wife."[45] Now what exactly does this mean? Is the Franklin offering some notion of equality in marriage, as many critics (including Spearing himself) assume? Notice that the Franklin continues: "Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above" (1. 795); and that as the marriage goes on, Dorigen is soon put in need of guidance from her husband. The stress, in short, falls on the "lordshipe" side of the equation. It is, however, "lordshipe" exercised with "gentillesse" (1. 754—where the word seems to mean simply 'generosity of spirit') and in the interests of "gentillesse" (1. 1595, where it suggests a concern for honour). It is the latter which puts Arveragus in the inviduous position of actually making arrangements for Dorigen to keep her rash though innocently made promise to the would-be adulterer,

Aurelius.

The Franklin's Tale, like The Nun's Priest's Tale, clearly shows the need for some readjustments in the love relationship after marriage. There must now be a proper balance between the man's emotional tie to the woman, and his assumption of male authority. He must not continue to be at the woman's beck and call, like the Wife of Bath's first three feeble husbands, nor yet should he become an insensitive tyrant like Walter in The Clerk's Tale. He has to exert a loving discipline. What is more, the claims of the world outside the relationship must be allowed to reassert themselves. Thus the resolution of the problem in this story comes, in Stephen Knight's words, "from husbandly firmness, action, feeling and control, and concern for the external world of honour."[46] For her part, the woman needs to lay aside the attitudes of a courtly lady: merely playing the courtly role with Aurelius ("Yet wolde I graunte yow to been youre love,/Syn I yow se so pitously complayne," 11. 990–1) puts Dorigen's virtue and her whole marriage at risk. She must now, as Knight says, accept "a subservient position."[47]

Spearing postulates that The Franklin's Tale shows a drift away from ideas about equality in marriage which challenged the *mores* of the time: the reason he suggests is that these ideas turn out to be impracticable as the tale takes on a life of its own, and escapes from the poet's "exemplifying intentions."[48] Knight's argument, that Dorigen's position in the marriage is consistently undercut, is much more convincing, however, and leads to the inference that the direction Chaucer takes is quite deliberate. It seems unlikely, in fact, that his "exemplifying intentions" here could ever have concerned *equality* in marriage. We cannot presume to be as dogmatic about Chaucer's purpose as such critics often are. Nevertheless, if The Franklin's Tale is still to be seen as providing the final solution to the problems of love and marriage aired in the *Tales*, it is worth noting that the signs point to a more pragmatic one than that of equality.

Equality and harmony should not be confused with each other. On the contrary, it is order which produces harmony in Chaucer's world-view, and in medieval thought in general. Love is the very fount of this—not an exception. It holds the "bridel" in *Troilus* (Ⅲ, 1. 1762), as it does in Chaucer's source there, Boethius.[49] Chaucer's achievement in this group of stories about marriage lies not in undermining the Boethian premise of Providential order in the universe, but in upholding it—in two related ways. One is by showing that something of the spirit of courtly love can and should be carried over into marriage; the other is by asserting the need for the husband to take the leading role in the new relationship. Arveragus and Dorigen's partnership is a stout one, able to withstand a particularly difficult test (for in this tale, magic powers are set to work *against* rather than *for* the couple). It is based not on the adulation of the woman which the outrageous Wife of Bath still demands, nor yet on any modern concept of equality, but on male "lordshipe" informed with courtly "gentillesse."

Some critics, such as Knight, flinch at this. They find it too discriminatory, and unfair towards women. They forget that Arveragus continues to be Dorigen's "servant in love," and that whatever decision he takes, he takes with her in mind. Unable or unwilling to acknowledge his "gentillesse," which Dorigen herself appreciates as giving

her a "large . . . reyne" (1. 755), Aers considers Arveragus's dominating behaviour "pretty ghastly."[50]

This is to look at Chaucer from a contemporary, specifically feminist point of view, though. If we put the poems in the context of their own times, we will be able to judge Chaucer's achievement more objectively. He has, indeed, accomplished much. Confronting the difficult issues raised by a relationship which was, and is, central to human happiness, he has put into perspective the enthusiasms of the medieval court, and traditional attitudes towards women. And after airing the various ideas of the age through the different pilgrims and their diverse narratives, he has presented us with his own vision of marriage. That vision leaves us with little room to doubt the widespread dissemination of courtly ideas about love, and is not necessarily invalidated by its failure to meet with popular approval now.

Notes

1 *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (New York: Oxford UP, 1958) 2.

2 *Tradition and Innovation in Chaucer* (London: Macmillan, 1982) 122.

3 See Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1977) 62ff. Of the various hypotheses examined, this still seems to be the most convincing, especially when a blendiing with feudal and sociological factors is admitted. See also Roger Sherman Loomis's discussion of the origins of "woman-worship" in *The Development of Arthurian Romance* (New York: Norton, 1963) 53–4.

4 J. D. Burnley, *"Fine Amor:* Its meaning and Context," *The Review of English Studies* 31 (May 1980): 129. (Burnley goes on to examine the term more closely, but agrees that the 'value' aspect of *fine amor* draws on the same sources of doctrine as the broader notion of courtliness" [147].)

5 "The Myth of Courtly Love" printed in Donaldson's *Speaking of Chaucer* (London: Athlone P, 1970) 155.

6 Lewis 2.

7 "Clio and Venus: An Historical View of Medieval Love," printed in *The Meaning of Courtly Love,* ed. F. X. Newman (Albany: State U of New York, 1968) 26.

8 Benton 27.

9 Newman vii.

10 Quoted by David Aers, *Chaucer* (Sussex: Harvester, 1986) 63.

11 Quoted by Robert P. Miller, ed., *Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds* (New York: Oxford UP, 1977) 432.

12 D. W. Robertson, Jr., "The Concept of Courtly Love as an Impediment to the Understanding of Medieval Texts," printed in *The Meaning of Courtly Love* 8. Robertson's primary interest at this point in his argument is to discuss the kind of feeling lords, knights, etc. would have had for a "great lady like Blanche of Lancaster." It would be similar, he says, to that inspired by Mary.

13 Miller 452.

14 Robertson 3.

15 Lewis 136.

16 Lewis 11.

17 Lewis was as aware of the "actual practice of feudal society" (13) as Aers.

18 Lewis 8.

19 Lewis 18.

20 See Bernard O'Donoghue's translation of some key passages from the *Roman* in *The Courtly Love Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1982) 206; also, Lewis's analysis of the two gardens (151ff). For a full discussion of the medieval perspective on earthly love, see Robertson's *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1962) 391ff. Robertson points out that the final message of "Andreas Cappellanus, of Chrétien de Troyes, and of a great many medieval writers" (including Chaucer) is to direct us towards the love of God (501).

21 Chaucer's translation of the *Roman.* This and all subsequent line references to Chaucer are to F. N. Robinson's 2nd ed. of the *Works* (London: Oxford UP, 1957).

22 *Speaking of Chaucer* 160; Lewis 118. Donaldson feels Andreas "meant to be funny" but that his wit was too limited—which is why his work came to be taken seriously. This seems too farfetched to me.

23 See n. 20 above.

24 Lewis 176.

25 Lewis 163.

26 Lewis 197.

27 Lewis 197.

28 S. S. Hussey, *Chaucer: An Introduction,* 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1981) 15.

29 H. A. Kelly, *Love and Marriage in the Age of Chaucer* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1975) 34.

30 P. M. Kean, *Chaucer and the Making of English Poetry* II: *The Art of Narrative* (London: Routledge, 1972) 142.

31 Brewer suggests that Chaucer is "deliberately *obscuring* the fact of illicit love" (24).

32 See Kelly 219–242. However, Kelly goes too far in insisting on the "reality" of such a marriage (219): this would make Criseyde a liar, an adulteress, even a bigamist, in her subsequent dealings with Diomede. Surely there *is* a "frontier" here, contrary to Kelly's belief, and Chaucer has not *yet* crossed it.

33 Lewis 196.

34 *The Canterbury Tales* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985) xiv.

35 Pearsall 2–3.

36 See J. A. W. Bennet's summary of the *Teseida,* in *Chaucer: The Knight's Tale,* 2nd ed. (London: Harrap, 1958) 27–32.

37 Miller gives a full translation, showing Emilia's behaviour in the garden (323–7).

38 "Form, Texture and Meaning in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale,*" in *Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism,* ed. Edward Wagenknecht (London: Oxford UP, 1959) 74.

39 Muscatine 80–1.

40 Quoted by Donald W. Rowe, *O Love O Charite! Contraries Harmonized in Chaucer's* Troilus (Carbondale: S. Illinois UP, 1976) 9.

41 See Kean 139.

42 Reprinted as "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage" in *Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism* 188–225.

43 Brewer 22.

44 *Chaucer and the English Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971) 278.

45 Introduction to *The Franklin's Prologue and Tale* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972) 30.

46 *Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) 123.

47 Knight 123.

48 Spearing 31.

49 See Chaucer's translation, *Boece* II, Metrum 8 (Robinson 340–1).

50 Aers 89.

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